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**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMERCE  
NEWS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20230**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
September 11, 2006  
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## **MBDA Rededicates Agency's Support for Minority Businesses Affected by Hurricane Katrina**

### ***Annual National MED Week Conference Recognize Anniversary of Katrina***

WASHINGTON, DC –On the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, August 29, 2006, the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) will kick off the National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week conference in Washington, DC at the Omni Shoreham Hotel.

"August 29<sup>th</sup> marks the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, which changed the lives of many Americans," said MBDA National Director Ronald N. Langston. "As we launch into MED Week, MBDA is rededicating the Agency's commitment to rebuilding minority businesses affected by Hurricane Katrina." The MED Week 2006 Conference will feature two workshops that will educate minority entrepreneurs on how they can take part in the rebuilding efforts in the Gulf Coast, gain access to contracting opportunities and learn about tax incentives in the Gulf.

"Recognizing the challenges that Gulf Coast minority business owners would face in trying to reestablish their businesses such as filing for disaster loans, finding alternative credit sources, rebuilding business records, infrastructure and inventory, MBDA launched into action a year ago" said Mr. Langston. "Under our *Rebuilding the Gulf Initiative*, we have opened satellite offices in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana to assist minority businesses with management and technical assistance. We expect to extend our reach into Biloxi, Mississippi and Mobile, Alabama, too."

During the annual awards Gala, MBDA paid special tribute to the New Orleans Marriott Hotel for its heroic effort in the face of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. Post-Katrina, the New Orleans Marriot Hotel continued to provide wages to its employees for months, and it provided living space for area university students to take classes and reside after being displaced from their campuses. Outstanding minority entrepreneurs across the U.S. also honored at the event which will be emceed by award winner actors and entrepreneurs, Tim and Daphne Reid.

In addition, Aminah Phelps, a student of Xavier University in New Orleans, LA, is this year's winner of the National Business Plan Competition, which is part of the MBDA's Emerging Business Leader Summit held during the National MED Week.

Award winners, their guests and over 1000 conference attendees enjoyed musical selections by the Morgan State University Choir and the Pan American Symphony Orchestra.

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MED Week, established by Presidential Proclamation each year since 1983, recognizes the role that minority entrepreneurs play in building the American economy through the creation of jobs, products and services, in addition to supporting their local communities. MBDA offers management and technical assistance to minority entrepreneurs with small, medium and large-sized companies through its network of funded centers throughout the United States.

The National MED Week Conference is MBDA's signature event for the minority business enterprise community including the private, non-profit and government sectors. The conference promotes and celebrates the vital role minority businesses play in generating wealth, creating jobs and strengthening our nation's economy. It also serves as a forum to discuss the issues, trends and strategies affecting minority-owned business enterprises.

This year's theme, *Minority Business Enterprises: Mastering the Supply Chain* emphasizes how new market realities require minority businesses to strategically position their businesses in domestic and global supply chains. Conference speakers include U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez, U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao, SBA Administrator Steven Preston, GSA Administrator Lurita Doan, and Dr. Matthew Slaughter of the President's Economic Advisory Council.

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#### **About the Minority Business Development Agency, US Department of Commerce**

Founded in 1971 and headquartered in Washington, DC, the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce. MBDA is the only federal agency created specifically to foster the establishment and growth of minority-owned businesses in this Nation. The Agency actively promotes the growth and competitiveness of large, medium and small minority business enterprises by offering management and technical assistance through a network of forty local business centers throughout the United States. Statistics on minority businesses and resources to build and sustain minority businesses are available at [www.mbda.gov](http://www.mbda.gov).

#### **About National Minority Enterprise Development Week**

For 24 years, the National MED Week Conference has served as the premiere event for minority businesses held in our Nation's Capital sponsored by the MBDA and other federal and private sector partners. Premium sponsors of the 2006 Conference include BAE Systems, IBM, Chevron, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon Company, VISA, FedEx and GVCwinstar. With nearly 1,000 attendees, the National MED Week features a White House breakfast series, networking events, industry-driven workshops, *State of Commerce* luncheon, business expo, and an awards gala. MED Week, designated by Presidential Proclamation since 1983, honors the achievements of minority-owned business enterprises in America. To learn more about MED Week, visit [www.medweek.gov](http://www.medweek.gov) or call 1-888-5-MED WEEK.